

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of pasteurising and vacuum packing food, comprising:

placing the food on a tray up to a filling degree of 40-60% of the maximum volume of the tray, the tray having a flexible bottom and stiff lateral walls extending in the vertical direction of the tray, the flexible bottom being chamfered along the periphery adjacent the lateral walls~~up to a filling degree of 40-60% of the maximum volume of the tray;~~

covering the tray with a flexible cover layer to form a package;

providing a one-way valve for one-directional communication from the interior of the package to the exterior thereof;

pasteurising the contents inside the package thus formed by way of microwaves; and

closing the valve upon completed pasteurisation of the package and cooling the package, a vacuum being created in the package in such a manner that the package with the vacuum-packaged food therein presents a centre portion where the distance between said flexible cover layer and said bottom is shorter than the distance between said flexible cover layer and said bottom at the peripheral edges of the package.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the one-way valve is arranged on said flexible cover layer.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said one-way valve is applied on said flexible cover layer during the step of covering said tray with the flexible cover.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said food includes all ingredients necessary for a ready-to-eat dish.

5. (Currently Amended) A package for use in a method of pasteurisation and vacuum-packing food, said method comprising placing the food on a tray up to a filling degree of 40-60% of the maximum volume of the tray, covering the tray with a flexible cover layer, providing one-way valve for one-directional communication from the interior of the package to the exterior thereof, pasteurising the contents inside the package thus formed by way of microwaves, closing the valve upon completed pasteurisation of the package and cooling the package, a vacuum being created in the package, and the tray including a flexible bottom and rigid lateral walls extending in the vertical direction of the tray, the flexible bottom being chamfered along the periphery adjacent the lateral walls, said package with vacuum-packaged food contained therein presenting a centre portion, where the distance between said flexible cover layer and said bottom is shorter than the distance between said flexible cover layer and said bottom at the peripheral edges of the package.

6. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 5, wherein the bottom of said tray has a convex shape as seen from below, when the pressure inside the package exceeds or equals the pressure exteriorly thereof.

7. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 5, wherein the bottom of the tray is formed with a section that is spaced from the periphery of the bottom, which is essentially flat.

8. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 7, wherein said section forms more than 40% of the total area of the bottom.

9. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 5, wherein the valve is arranged on said flexible cover layer.

10. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 9, wherein said valve includes a slit formed in said flexible cover layer and of a reclosable adhesive film extending across the slit.

11. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 5, wherein the valve is arranged to emit a sound signal when vapour is flowing through said valve.

12. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 5, wherein the tray part located at the periphery of the bottom extends at an angle to the direction of extension of the tray.

13. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said food includes all ingredients necessary for a ready-to-eat dish.

14. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said food includes all ingredients necessary for a ready-to-eat dish.

15. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 6, wherein the bottom of the tray is formed with a section that is spaced from the periphery of the bottom, which is essentially flat.

16. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 8, wherein the valve is arranged on said flexible cover layer.

17. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 16, wherein said valve includes a slit formed in said flexible cover layer and of a reclosable adhesive film extending across the slit.

18. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 17, wherein the valve is arranged to emit a sound signal when vapour is flowing through said valve.

19. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 6, wherein the tray part located at the periphery of the bottom extends at an angle to the direction of extension of the tray.

20. (Previously Presented) A package as claimed in claim 7, wherein the tray part located at the periphery of the bottom extends at an angle to the direction of extension of the tray.

<End of Claims Listing>